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UNCLAS COLOMBO 000460

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: COUNTRY TEAM ASSESSMENT FOR SURVEILLANCE RADARS
FOR STATIC & MOBILE COASTAL RADAR STATIONS

REF: LOR SUBMISSION FOR SURVEILLANCE RADARS FOR BOTH STATIC
& MOBILE COASTAL RADAR STATIONS

1. THE GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA HAS SUBMITTED REFERENCE (FORWARDED UNDER SEPARATE COVER) REQUEST FOR SURVEILLANCE RADARS FOR BOTH STATIC & MOBILE COASTAL RADAR STATIONS. THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE CURRENTLY DESIRES TO ESTABLISH COASTAL RADAR STATIONS AND IS REQUESTING FOUR HIGH FREQUENCY OVER THE HORIZON SURFACE WAVE RADARS WITH A MINIMUM RANGE OF 200 NM FOR STATIC RADAR STATIONS AND ONE HIGH FREQUENCY OVER THE HORIZON SURFACE WAVE RADAR WITH A MINIMUM RANGE OF 200 NM FOR A MOBILE RADAR STATION.

2. AMEMBASSY COLOMBO STRONGLY SUPPORTS THIS SALE AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 70003 OF THE SAMM, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS SUBMITTED:

A. SRI LANKA REQUIRES THE SURVEILLANCE RADARS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COASTAL RADAR STATIONS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE MARITIME SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITY. IN PARTICULAR, THE SRI LANKAN NAVY REQUIRES THIS PLATFORM FOR SURVEILLANCE OPERATIONS WITHIN THE ECONOMIC EXCLUSIVE ZONE AND IN SUPPORT OF GWOT. AT PRESENT, THE SRI LANKAN MILITARY HAS NO COASTAL RADAR STATIONS, ONLY SHIP-BASED RADAR SYSTEMS. A US-DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ASSESSMENT OF THE SRI LANKAN MILITARY IN SEPTEMBER 2002 REPORTED LIMITED MARITIME SURVEILLANCE AND INTERDICTION CAPABILITY TO BE THE CENTER OF GRAVITY IN THE WAR AGAINST THE LTTE. ALTHOUGH A CEASE-FIRE HAS BEEN IN EFFECT FOR OVER TWO YEARS, THE LTTE SEA TIGERS CONTINUE TO OPERATE IN BOTH COASTAL AND INLAND WATERS. GREATER SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITY IS REQUIRED TO MONITOR THE LTTE SHIPPING NETWORK, WHICH CONTINUES TO BE INVOLVED IN GUNRUNNING.

B. THE ACQUISITION OF THE SURVEILLANCE RADARS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF COASTAL RADAR STATIONS WOULD IMPROVE THE COUNTRY'S ABILITY TO REACH ITS NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES AND DETER POTENTIAL LTTE VIOLATIONS OF THE CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT BY INCREASING THE SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITY OF THE SRI LANKAN NAVY. THE INITIATION OF THIS PROGRAM WOULD REQUIRE THE SLN TO GENERATE NEW UNITS TO MAN THE RADAR STATIONS, CAUSING A SLIGHT ALTERATION IN THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE NAVY.

C. WHILE INDIA, SRI LANKA'S CLOSEST AND MOST STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT NEIGHBOR, MIGHT VOICE CONCERNS OVER THE SPECIFIC POSITIONING OF THE RADAR STATIONS, THEY WOULD LIKELY HAVE NO CONCERNS OVER THE ACQUISITION OF SUCH A SYSTEM. INDIA CURRENTLY ASSISTS SRI LANKA IN SURVEILLANCE OPERATIONS, INCLUDING PATROLS OF THE PALK STRAIT. INDIA WOULD LIKELY VIEW SRI LANKA'S ESTABLISHMENT OF COASTAL RADAR STATIONS AND THE ACQUISITION OF SURVEILLANCE RADARS FAVORABLY AS ANY INCREASED SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITY BY THE SRI LANKAN NAVY WOULD REDUCE INDIAN NAVY RESPONSIBILITIES.

D. TRAINING IN THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE RADAR STATIONS WOULD BE REQUIRED AS A PART OF THE FMS PACKAGE. THE SLN WOULD LIKELY TRAIN DEDICATED PERSONNEL TO FOCUS ON SURVEILLANCE RADAR MAINTENANCE. WITH APPROPRIATE TRAINING, SLN OPERATORS AND MAINTAINERS SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE KEEPING SUCH SYSTEMS RUNNING.

E. THIS SALE SHOULD BE FINANCED WITH COUNTRY FUNDS. THESE EXPENSES WERE NOT INCLUDED IN THE ANNUAL DEFENSE PROCUREMENT BUDGET FOR 2004, HOWEVER, SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE INDICATED THAT FUNDING WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE. THE OVERALL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE TRANSFER ON THE SRI LANKAN ECONOMY IS INSIGNIFICANT.

F. ALTHOUGH HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS CONTINUE TO BE A PRIORITY WITH AMEMBASSY COLOMBO, THE GENERAL LEVEL OF HUMAN RIGHTS GUARANTEES IS GOOD AND IMPROVING CONTINUOUSLY IN SRI LANKA. THIS CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT AFFECT THE PROPOSED SALE.

G. AMEMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THE APPROVAL OF THIS PROPOSED SALE.

3. POC FOR THIS ACTION IS LTC RICHARD S. GIRVEN, ARMY AND DEFENSE ATTACHE, USDAO COLOMBO, OR MS. HEATHER CARTER, MARITIME PROGRAMS SPECIALIST, USDAO COLOMBO.

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